

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5419

AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 8502

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJ: ASMARA ABDUCTIONS

1. AS WE PREPARE TO HANDLE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF EFFECTING RELEASE OF "CISCO TWO," EMBASSY AND CONGEN AS WELL AS DEPT WILL BE CONSIDERING VARIOUS OPTIONS AND BACKGROUND FACTORS. AS EVENTS UNFOLD OPTIONS WILL BE NARROWED AND WE CAN FOCUS MORE INTELLIGENTLY, BUT HERE ARE SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST LIKELY AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION WITH ABDUCTORS? INITIAL COMMUNICATION PROBABLY WILL BE DELIVERED BY HAND IN ASMARA AREA. AFTER THAT, WE THINK IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO TRY TO KEEP COMMUNICATIONS IN ASMARA CONTEXT RATHER THAN SHIFT VENUE TO KHARTOUM AS IN TENNECO CASE. IDEALLY, WE WOULD WISH TO LOCATE AND ENGAGE A RELIABLE ETHIOPIAN COURIER IN ASMARA, APPROVED BY USG, EPMG, AND INSURGENTS, TO DELIVER AND RECEIVE LETTERS. CENTRALIZING COMMUNICATIONS WOULD HELP TO WEED OUT EFFORTS OF FABRICATORS, OPPORTUNISTS AND OTHERS WHO MAY TRY TO GET INTO THE ACT. EPMG MAY NOT BE AS COOPERATIVE OR RELIABLE AS WE WOULD LIKE, OR AS FAST, IN APPROVING OUTGOING MESSAGES, REPORTING TO US INCOMING MESSAGES, ETC., AND WE WILL NEED DESIGNATED, COMPETENT AND RAPID LIAISON CHANNELS TO EPMG IN ADDIS AND ASMARA. CAN SFR OR CONGEN SUGGEST MEANS OF OPENING UNILATERAL USG CHANNELS TO INSURGENTS IN ERITREA (AS OPPOSED TO EMIGREE TYPES ELSEWHERE)?

3. WHAT LEVERAGES FROM THIRD PARTIES SHOULD WE CONSIDER USING ON

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ABDUCTORS? A NEW INTELLIGENCE APPRAISAL OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ELF

AND PLF, AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH ARABS, SHOULD BE PREPARED IN WASHINGTON. PERHAPS WE CAN DISCOVER MEANS OF USING ELF PRESSURE ON PLF (IF PLF IS THE CULPRIT), TO ASSIST IN OBTAINING RELEASE. ASSUME DEPT IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER, AT LATER STAGE, PRIVATE USG REQUESTS TO EGYPT, SAUDIS, SUDAN, AND OTHERS TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PERSUADE ERITREANS TO RELEASE THE MEN. WHAT KIND OF ARGUMENTS WOULD WE USE IN SUCH APPROACHES?

4. AFTER WE KNOW DEMANDS OF ABDUCTORS WE CAN CONTRIBUTE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE OUR REPOSSES TO SPECIFIC DEMANDS. FOR NOW, ASSUME WASHINGTON IS UNDERTAKING SOME CONTINGENCY THINKING, AND IS REVIEWING TENNECO EXPERIENCE AS BACKGROUND.

5. WOULD WELCOME REACTIONS, REALIZING THAT DETAILED RESPONSES TO MUCH OF FOREGOING WILL NOT YET BE POSSIBLE.
HUMMEL

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NNN

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